

IRS News Release

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IRS Launches Summer Push to Reach Retirees and Disabled Veterans Who Have Yet to File for Their Economic Stimulus Payments

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WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service today announced a new summer campaign to reach those retirees and disabled veterans who qualify for the economic stimulus payment but have not filed to claim it. New statistics released today indicate about 74 percent in this group are accounted for in the stimulus payments currently being sent, leaving about 5.2 million potential recipients remaining.

For all taxpayers, the IRS has issued 76.5 million payments worth \$63.8 billion based on 2007 tax returns processed so far. The agency expects to issue 124 million payments to Americans by year's end. Eligible individuals are receiving up to \$600 (\$1,200 for married couples filing joint returns) plus \$300 for eligible children younger than 17.

"The IRS has delivered. Only 70 days after the legislation became law, the IRS started putting the money in the hands of tens of millions of Americans. This summer, we will go the extra mile to help the remaining retirees and disabled veterans get their payments," said Doug Shulman, IRS Commissioner.

A special stimulus category includes recipients of certain benefits from Social Security and Veterans Affairs who do not normally have a requirement to file a tax return. However, these individuals must file a tax return before Oct. 15 this year to receive their economic stimulus payments. The IRS has accounted for 74 percent of Social Security and Veterans Affairs beneficiaries out of about 20 million initially identified as being potential stimulus recipients. All but 5.2 million of those have been accounted for as either having filed a return, having filed a joint return, or as not being eligible for a stimulus payment (for example, they were claimed as a dependent on another's return).

Most people only need to file a tax return as they normally do. The IRS will calculate eligibility and the payment amount. However, many retirees and veterans do not normally file a tax return because their benefits are not taxable. This year, they must file in order to receive an economic stimulus payment.

Shulman also stressed to retirees that receiving the stimulus payment should have no impact on other federal benefits currently being received. The stimulus payment is not taxable. Absent any other filing requirements, filing a tax return to receive a stimulus payment does not mean that retirees will have to start filing tax returns again.

The IRS has identified 5.2 million retirees and veterans' beneficiaries who potentially are eligible for the stimulus payments. Later this summer, the agency will send them a special letter that explains stimulus payment eligibility and how to claim it. The letter will include a sample tax form and an actual tax form that people can complete and mail to the IRS. This will be the second special mailing to reach those individuals.

The IRS also is working with members of Congress, state and local officials and national partners such as AARP, the National Council on Aging, United Way of America, National Disability Institute and others to continue its extensive outreach efforts to the retiree and veterans' communities through the summer. The IRS will take the lead in coordinating face-to-face free tax preparation sessions with the help of local community partners at locations where these individuals live, work and socialize such as senior housing, Veterans Affairs hospitals and assisted living facilities.

The agency also reminded people that it has more than 400 local Taxpayer Assistance Centers operating normal business hours Monday through Friday. These centers can provide assistance to retirees and veterans trying to receive their payments. A list for addresses and office hours can be found at "Contact My Local Office" at www.irs.gov.

"Some retirees and others who normally do not file a tax return may be eligible and not know it. And, that's where we could use the public's help as well. If you know of a retiree or a disabled veteran who might qualify, please pass along the information to them," said Shulman.

The Economic Stimulus Act of 2008 generally provided for payments of \$600 (\$1,200 for married couples filing joint returns or the amount equal to the 2007 net income tax liability, whichever is less,), plus \$300 for each qualifying child. Payments also begin to phase out for individuals with adjusted gross incomes greater than \$75,000 (\$150,000 married couples filing jointly).

For people who have no tax liability or no tax filing requirement, there is a minimum payment of \$300 (\$600 for married couples), plus the \$300 for each qualifying child. To be eligible for the minimum payment, individuals must have at least \$3,000 in qualifying income. Qualifying income includes any combination of earned income, nontaxable combat pay and certain benefit payments from Social Security, Veterans Affairs and Railroad Retirement.

People not otherwise required to file an income tax return should file Form 1040A with basic information to ensure they receive the economic stimulus payment. This information includes name; address; dependents, if any; amount of qualifying income (which must be \$3,000 or more); direct deposit information and signatures. Forms 1040A and instructions are available at www.irs.gov.

Although, your payment can be made by check, the IRS urges people to use direct deposit to ensure a speedy delivery.

The types of Social Security benefits that are considered qualifying income include retirement, disability and survivor payments. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is not qualifying income. The types of Veterans Affairs benefits that are considered qualifying

income include disability compensation, disability pension and survivor payments. Qualifying Railroad Retirement payments include the social security equivalent portion of Tier 1 benefits.

Eligible individuals including their qualifying children, must have valid Social Security numbers. Also, people cannot be claimed or be eligible to be claimed as a dependent on someone else's tax return. People with Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers, except for the spouses and qualifying children of military personnel, are not eligible.